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NEWS RELEASE

Nov. 13, 2009

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UM LAW SCHOOL NEGOTIATION TEAM COMPETES IN BOISE

MISSOULA –

A team from The University of Montana School of Law traveled to Boise, Idaho, Nov. 7-8 to compete in the regional American Bar Association Negotiation Competition.

UM's Negotiation Competition Team comprised Katie Mazurek of **Charlevoix, Mich.**; Sarah Rossi of **Hopedale, Ill.**; Katie Guffin of **Missoula**; Andrew Howell of **Billings**; and alternates Jessica LaRoche of **Bozeman** and Josh Nichols of **Beatrice, Neb.** The team is coached by Klaus Sitte, adjunct lecturer with the UM law school and executive director of the Montana Legal Services Association.

UM competed in a field of 24 teams from law schools in California, Idaho, Oregon, Washington, Alberta, British Columbia and Saskatchewan. Five California teams had been invited to join Region 10's Northwest and western Canada teams to round out the field.

This year's competition, hosted by the University of Idaho, focused on employment law. The UM team simulated representing an employee in negotiations with his employer about returning to work after time away on medical and family leave. Each successive round overlaid the discussions with increasingly complex issues and disputes.

UM team members Mazurek and Rossi were unable to duplicate their appearance in last year's quarterfinal round.

“With 24 teams competing, we knew it was going to be much harder to get a repeat,” Mazurek said. “But it was a wonderful learning experience, especially for our new team members.”

Guffin and Howell competed for the first time after serving as alternates last year.

Guffin said, “It was a great learning experience to compete with other teams from all over the Northwest and Canada, and this time even California.”

Howell added, “This year’s competition will prepare us for really practicing law and get us ready for next year’s competition.”

Sitte has coached the UM Negotiation Competition Team since 1991, with five of those teams competing nationally and one internationally. UM teams have placed second and third at the national competition.

“Boise was a building year for us,” Sitte said. “We wanted our team to grow from the experience. They were able to observe different styles and become more confident in their own.”

Guffin, Howell, LaRoche and Nichols will all return to compete in next year’s Region 10 competition in Salem, Ore.

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